

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**UPDATE BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA ON SECOND ANNUAL THINKING
INCLUSIVELY EVENT: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND THE AMERICAN DREAM**

Action Requested: Receive the update.

Executive Summary: In partnership with the Inclusion Connection, a nonprofit Cedar Valley organization, the Iowa chapter of TASH,¹ the Center for Disability Studies in Literacy, Language, and Learning, and the College of Education, the University of Northern Iowa will host a documentary film screening and panel discussion to promote commentary and discussion regarding educational opportunity for students with disabilities.

The film screening will feature the documentary, *Willing and Able*, the story of the O'Hearn Elementary School in Boston, MA. At the O'Hearn School (recently renamed the William W. Henderson Inclusion Elementary School), students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and ability backgrounds learn alongside and with one another. In addition to the film screening, a panel of local educators, students, administrators and family members will be invited to respond to the current educational climate and challenges relating to how we, as educators and community members, meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities. A central question will guide the discussion: How do we support all students in reaching their educational potential and thereby achieving the American dream? Most exciting, the film screening and panel discussion will be facilitated by its former principal, Bill Henderson and the film's director, John Douchet.

The event will be held in the Gallagher Blueadorn on October 18, 2012. The event will include a reception in the lobby beginning at 6:00 with the film and panel discussion to follow at 7:00.

UNI Special Education faculty member Amy Petersen will provide brief comments. Dr. Petersen received her Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Northern Iowa. Her areas of specialty include disability studies, inclusion, low incidence disabilities, qualitative research, and autoethnography.

¹ Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities.